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ON PAGE A-3

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U.S. Reports Signs of Soviet Activity On Poland's East and West Borders

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 19 — The United States said today that it had noted signs of "increased military activity" by the Soviet Union along Poland's western and eastern borders, raising concern among some officials about Soviet motives.

While the officials cautioned that the data so far was tentative, the increase in Soviet communications traffic and the movement of forces near the Polish borders were unsettling to several officials who only a week ago were reporting no indications of unusual Soviet movements.

"We have noted signs of increased military activity by Soviet forces," said John H. Trattner, the State Department spokesman. "We are monitoring Soviet troop activity very closely. I cannot give you a detailed analysis."

A senior Administration official said: "We don't want to build up a war scare. It is simply that the situation is sufficiently ambiguous to make some Europeans concerned."

Increased Aid for Poland

Formally, the Soviet leaders have welcomed the actions of the new Polish leader, Stanislaw Kania, and have agreed to increase economic aid to Poland.

When a crisis atmosphere existed in Poland during the recent widespread strikes, American officials were relieved that Soviet forces in the western Soviet Union and in East Germany were doing nothing near the Polish frontiers that could be seen as provocative.

There are perhaps 20 Soviet divisions in East Germany and 20 in the western part of the Soviet Union, the officials said. Some units were involved in Warsaw Pact exercises in East Germany and the adjacent Baltic Sea area from Sept. 4 to 12, but the current activity is apparently unrelated to the maneuvers.

The officials said that the Soviet activity was worrying Western European governments more than the United States, which has not raised the matter with the Soviet Union. A Pentagon official said the Defense Intelligence Agency was more concerned than the Central Intelligence Agency or the State Department.

Warning to Polish Workers

Some State Department officials speculated that the Russians might be trying to warn the Polish workers and Government not to assume that Moscow would accept whatever happened in Poland.

Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie said in a recent interview that the Russians had been restrained in the Polish crisis, theorizing that it was because of the worldwide reaction to the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan last December.

Soviet troops were sent into action in East Berlin in 1953, in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 to reassert Soviet dominance.

Throughout the Polish crisis officials here wondered whether the Russians might move into Poland. It has generally been assumed here that the Soviet Union would intervene only in the most extreme circumstances, because to do so would have a chilling effect on the West and would probably help unify the Western alliance at a time when Moscow is seeking to weaken Western European links to the United States.